

SMOKEFREE HOMES

WHAT IS A SMOKEFREE HOME?

A smokefree home is a home where use of any tobacco products (such as manufactured or roll-your-own cigarettes, cigars, waterpipes and heated tobacco products) and electronic cigarettes is not allowed anywhere (including balconies and terraces).



WHY USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS OR ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES AT HOME IS DANGEROUS

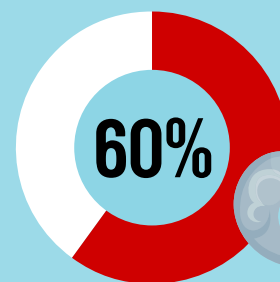
Secondhand smoke (SHS) is a mixture of the smoke emitted from the burning end of a cigarette and the smoke exhaled by the smoker (1).

SHS is carcinogenic – it causes cancer in humans. Smoked tobacco products, including waterpipes, contain 7000 chemicals, and at least 250 of these are known to be toxic or to cause cancer (2,3).

Secondhand aerosol (SHA), which is exhaled by the user of an electronic cigarette, contains a number of harmful chemicals (4). The long-term effects of SHA exposure are not yet known (5).

SHS exposure affects the health of **all household members**, but it is particularly harmful to **children** and **pregnant women**.

Did you know that home is a major source of SHS exposure for children (6,7)?



In some countries of the WHO European Region, **up to 60% of children are exposed to SHS at home** (8).

FOR CHILDREN, PREGNANT WOMEN AND ADULTS, EXPOSURE TO SHS INCREASES THE RISK OF A WHOLE RANGE OF HARMFUL CONDITIONS AND OUTCOMES, INCLUDING:

CHILDREN (9,10)



- sudden infant death syndrome
- lower respiratory infections
- ear infection
- more severe asthma
- learning and conduct problems

PREGNANT WOMEN (9,10)



- harm to the fetus (including fetal death)
- preterm birth
- low birth weight

ADULTS (6,11)



- stroke
- lung and breast cancer
- coronar heart disease
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- asthma
- diabetes mellitus
- progression from tuberculosis infection to active disease

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MOREOVER, SMOKING AT HOME:

→ **creates exposure to thirdhand smoke (THS)**

THS is residual tobacco smoke contamination that remains in dust and on surfaces (such as carpets, furniture, toys and curtains) after a cigarette has been extinguished (12). Babies who are crawling, or young children who have a tendency to put objects in their mouths, come into further contact with chemicals in THS through their skin (13).

→ **is one of the most important risk factors for fatal fires in homes**

Some European countries report that about a quarter of fatal residential fires are caused by smoking (14).

→ **harms your pets**

Pets are exposed to both SHS and THS. This may have a negative impact on their cardiovascular and respiratory health and can cause cancer, eye and skin problems (15).

→ **normalizes smoking**

Parental smoking normalizes smoking among family members. Introduction of a total smoking ban at home lowers the risk of adolescents taking up smoking (16).



THERE ARE A NUMBER OF MYTHS CLAIMING THAT SMOKERS CAN REDUCE OR ELIMINATE THE HARM DONE BY SMOKING AT HOME IN VARIOUS WAYS. THESE ARE ALL FALSE.



MYTH

FACT



"Smoking near a window eliminates SHS"

Smoking near or leaning out of an open window does not protect your family. SHS drifts into your house. At the same time, by doing this, you may expose your neighbours to SHS.

"Smoking in one room with closed doors protects from SHS"

Designating a specific room for smoking does not offer effective protection from SHS as it drifts into the rest of the house (17).

"Using ventilation, air conditioning or opening windows removes smoke"

These systems do not get rid of SHS and may even distribute it throughout a building (17,18). Only avoiding smoking inside or near a house protects from SHS (19).

"Smoking only on a balcony protects from SHS"

SHS can get into your home when you open the balcony door. Moreover, THS still persists on a balcony and can be brought inside the home. So this kind of behaviour does not protect from exposure (20).

SO WHAT IS THE BOTTOM LINE?



There is **no safe level of exposure to SHS**. Even short exposure can cause harm (21). Only a **complete ban on smoking at home** effectively protects the health of all household members (7).

Making your home completely smokefree will:

- improve the health of all household members
- make your home smell better
- encourage smokers to give up or to smoke less (22)
- help recent quitters to avoid lapsing (23)
- protect your home from fires and save money on additional property renovation.





TIPS FOR CREATING A SMOKEFREE HOME

- ✓ Think about the **reasons** relevant for you and for people you live with to create a smokefree home and discuss these with all household members.
- ✓ Think about a **place** where smokers can go to smoke outside.
- ✓ Decide on a specific **date** when your home will become smokefree.
- ✓ **Prepare** for the change: remove ashtrays; clean your home; inform relatives and friends that smoking won't be allowed anywhere in your home.
- ✓ Once you have adopted a smokefree rule, **maintain** it: use reminder cards around your home; discuss how the change is going with all household members; celebrate your achievements ("a week smokefree" or "a month smokefree").

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¹ All online references were accessed 24 January 2023.